

The Historical

CATECHISM

CONTAINING

*ingenious Answers to many notable Questions of
Several wonderful Matters in Ancient History.*

1. What is the Opinion of all our Historians about
the Apple old Mother Eve tempted Adam withal.
Why the Devil should take the Shape of a Ser-
pent. Of the Building the Tower of Babel nine
Miles round by five hundred thousand Men who
left off confounded in their Language. Also se-
veral Questions about Sodom and Gomorrah No-
ah's Ark, and Solomon's Temple, informing us
from Scripture what Day that was, that the like
was never before nor shall be: Likewise giving
a full Account of the Destruction of Jerusalem,
how the Jews were dispersed and scattered over
the Face of the whole Earth. Also Josephus and
the Romans Account of our Saviour and the Mi-
racles wrought at his Birth; with a wonderful
Appearance that happen'd at Mahomet's Tomb:
The wonderful Prophecies of the Ten Sybils;
The famous Relation of Seven Sleepers,
who have two hundred Years.

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tion. **W**hat Apple or Fruit was that Adam eat in Paradise, and brought Sin and Death upon him and his Posterity.

A. It is uncertain, for the Holy Scripture mentions it not; the Authors vary in their Opinions, some say it is a Persian Apple, growing where Paradise was situated; but the most likely is what the Romans believe, which is a Musk Apple, and when ever it is cut, there appears a Crucifix in it.

Q. Why did the Devil assume the shape of a Serpent rather than any other Creature when he tempted Eve? For its very strange the Devil being a Spirit and could assume any shape he might have took upon him the shape of a delightful and familiar Creature and not of that hateful and despicable Creature a Serpent?

A. You must consider the Difference of this Creature since Adam's Fall: For before that Time the Serpent was as familiar with Adam and Eve as the Bird is now with a Boy: Therefore the Devil assum'd that Shape, thinking thereby to gain his End the sooner, which prov'd too true.

Q. Why is the Serpent so hateful and despicable now?

A. From the Words God spoke, when he curs'd it. Because thou hast done this, upon thy Belly shalt thou go, and eat Dust all the Days of thy Life, and I will put Enmity between thy Seed and the Seed of the Woman, which remains still in the Nature of every Man and Woman.

Q. What Account do the Ancients give of Babel?

A. It was the famous Structure after Noah's Flood

or Nimrod perswaded the People to build a large
 and high Edifice, to resist the Fury of a second De-
 volution. His Council was generally receiv'd by He-
 ber's Family, who oppos'd such a presumptuous At-
 tempt. However they began to raise the Tower of
 Babel 461 Paces from the Ground, its Circumfe-
 rence being agreeable. The Passage going up was
 winding and broad, there being not only Room for
 Chaises Carts, &c. but Lodgings for Man & Beast,
 with Grass and Corn fields. And wonderful 'twas
 to consider, that but 8 Persons came out of Noah's
 Ark and this Building was carried on by 500000
 Men, the Foundation being 9 Miles round. But
 soon, by the Confusion of Tongues, put a Stop to
 their Works, one not being able to understand ano-
 ther; which is thus wittily express'd by the Poet.

Bring me quoth one a Trowel quickly quick
 He brings him up a Hammer: Hew this Brick?

Another bids, and then they cleave a Tree

He takes fast for Rope, and then they let it flee

He calls for Planks, the other Mortar lacks,

They give the first a Stone the last an Axe

He would have Nails and him a Spade they give

Another asks a Saw and gets a Sieve

Thus crossly cross'd they call'd and rail'd in vain,

That one hath made the other spoils again

Which made them leave their Work and like mad Fools,

Scatter their Stuff, and tumble down their Tools

Q What Country is reported to be the most desolate
 and solitary in the World?

A. The Land about Sodom and Gomorrah where
 there were 13 Cities built on a fruitful Soil, a plea-

ant

tant Paradise; but they sinned greatly, wherefore God rained Brimstone & Fire from Heaven, which destroy'd their whole Land, laying not one Stone upon another, to shew their former Glory, there remaining a sulphurous smell that stifles the Birds, Beasts and Fishes: There are Apples of a beautiful Appearance, but within full of sulphurous Ashes.

Q. Why were Mens Lives longer before Noah's Flood than since?

A. As the World declines, so does the Nature of all therein: as the Planets were more glorious, so were Mens Bodies; Meteors, Comets and Eclipses, produce Diseases, which were then seld m seen: The Earth was more fruitful, Plants, Herbs and Vegetables more us'd, and their Virtues stronger, People drinking more Water, and eating less Meat; the Excess of which has destroy'd more than the Sword, Pestilence and Famine.

Q. What Day was that, the like was never before nor shall be again?

A. When *Joshua* pray'd, the Sun stood still, making the Day 36 Hours long, till he overcame his Enemies.

Q. What Part of the Earth was that which was only seen three times of Mankind?

A. The bottom of the River *Jordan*, divided by God, and passed over by the Children of *Israel*; and afterwards seen by *Joshua*, by *Elijah*, and last by *Elisha*.

Q. What do Historians write of Solomon's Temple?

A. The Temple was built on a rocky Mountain, and the Foundation 300 Cubits deep; the Stones

30 Cubits high; Porches double, supported by
 60 Pillars 25 Cubits high, of one piece of curi-
 ous Marble, the Tops of Cedar. The Porches were
 30 Cubits broad, and the Compass 6 Furlongs, the
 Courts of fine Work, pav'd with all sorts of Stones
 like Lattices, 3 Cubits high, all the Gates cover'd
 with Plate of Gold. The Holy of Holies was in
 the midst, the first Gate 20 Cubits high, and had
 20 Doors; all the fore-parts were gilded. & with-
 in cover'd with fine Gold; about the Wall was a
 golden Vine with Clusters like Grapes, all of Gold
 each Cluster being 6 Foot long. It had Golden
 Gates and Hinges wrought with Gold. Velvet, Scar-
 er, Silk & all the Fabrick cover'd with massy Gold.
 The top was set with Rocks of Gold, sharp like
 Pikes, lest Birds should sit thereon and defile it. The
 Temple was first built by King Solomon and after-
 wards plunder'd by Shishack King of Ægypt and a-
 gain by Joash King of Israel, in the Reign of Amas-
 ah. After this by Abaz King of Judah to present
 Piglach Pileser with the Treasure thereof. And
 lastly, Nebuchadnezzar laid this Temple and City
 even to the Ground. It was rebuilt by Nehemiah,
 and pillag'd by Burgesses, then by Ptolemy &c. Yet
 after all, Herod the Great rebuilt and enlarg'd this
 City, new built the Temple, and left it more stately
 and glorious than in the Days of Solomon. But above
 40 Years after the Death of our Saviour, the Sins of
 the Jews being come to their height, it was destroy'd
 by Titus Son of Vespasian, Emperor of Rome who
 would willingly have saved the Holy of Holies, and
 entering into it said, *Now I well perceive that this is*

no other than the Dwelling place of the King of Heaven and now I don't wonder that the Jews fought earnestly in Defence thereof nor that the Gentiles sent their Gold and Silver to this Temple it surpasses all the Temples that ever I saw. But some of the seditious Jews flew the Guards that he set to preserve it, and threw Firebrands in at the Windows, which put it all in flames; whereupon Titus in Wrath said, The God of Heaven who is God of this House take Vengeance on the seditious Jews, whose wicked Deeds have brought this Evil upon them.

Q. Where is it said that all Strangers that travel now to Jerusalem are buried when they die?

A. In Acceldama, or the Field of Blood that was purchased with the 30 Pieces of Silver that Judas betray'd our Saviour for; the Field having such quality, that if a Carcass is laid therein, it will be consumed in 48 Hours.

What were the dreadful signs and wonders which foretold the Destruction of Jerusalem.

A. The Year before the Romans came, a bright Star appear'd over the Temple, as if a Man had held many drawn Swords in his Hand, and the Temple was as light as at Noon-day, seven Nights together. A Heifer being knockt down for Sacrifice brought forth a Lamb. A Man's Face was seen in the Holy of Holies, looking very Terrible; Four Chariots with Horsemen were seen fighting in the Air. In the Temple the Priests heard a terrible Voice to say, Come let us go out of the Temple let us hasten from hence. The Jews remaining still stubborn, regarded no signs till Destruction fell upon them.

Q. *Is there not a strange Relation of one Joshua, Jesus the Son of Ananias.*

A. Yes, this Jesus coming up to the Tabernacles before the War began, he broke out in this Exclamation, *A Voice from the East a Voice from the West, a Voice to Jerusalem a Voice to the Temple a Voice to all Nations.* Hereupon the Governor of Judea caused him to be whipt till his Bones were seen, and at every Lash he cry'd *Woe woe to Jerusalem!* Another time he went round the walls crying, *Woe woe to this City, woe to the Temple woe to the Temple woe to my self!* And a Stone came and kill'd him at that instant.

Q. *What became of the Jewish Nation after that wicked Act of Crucifying the Lord of Life?*

A. God's Judgments according to their deserts, & his Saviours Prophecie overtook them: For the Romans with a mighty Army, besieg'd, plunder'd and rent the City and Temple, and put vast Numbers of them to Famine, Fire and Sword, the rest becoming a scatter'd People over the whole Earth.

Q. *Was there ever any Attempt made to re-build the Temple?*

A. Yes, Julian the Apostate Emperor of Rome resolved to re-build it in Opposition to Christ's Prophecie, that *one Stone should not be left upon another;* when the workmen were laying the Foundation, a dreadful Earthquake happened, so that the work and workmen were all destroy'd.

Q. *What did they discover at the laying the Foundation?*

A. There

A. There was a Stone which flipt from the Place and discovered the Mouth of a Cave, wherein was found a *Book* very fresh wrapt up in Linnen-Cloth which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* open'd and there was writ, *In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God.* VVhich contained all the Gospel *St. John* had declared.

Q what Account does *Josephus* give of our Saviour?

A. That *JESUS* was a wise Man, he shewed wonders, and taught the Truth to those that followed him.

Q what Miracles happened at the Birth of our Saviour?

A. At his Birth the Temple dedicated to the Hea then Goddess fell to the Ground; the Romans inquired of their Oracle *Apollo* when 'twas first built how long it should stand? who answer'd, till a Virgin should bring forth a Son; which made them think it would stand for ever. *St. Jerom* saies, when the Virgin *Mary* fled with her Son to *Aegypt* all the Images of the Gods fell down, the Oracles and Devils ceas'd.

Q what is further related of Christ in Scripture?

A. *Dionysius* being at *Athens* the Day of Christs Death, said, This Eclipse was unnatural, and that the World either was at an end, or the God of Nature then suffer'd.

Q what

Q What Account do the Romans give of Christ?

A. In the Reign of Tiberius Caesar, *Lentulus* the Roman Governor of *Judea* writ the following Letter.

Here appeared in our Days a Man of great Virtue, called *JESUS CHRIST* who is yet living amongst us, and by the People is call'd a Prophet but his Disciples call him the Son of God. He raiseth the Dead and cureth all manner of Diseases, a Man of Stature somewhat tall and comely, with a reverend Countenance, such as Beholders may both fear and love. His Hair is of the Colour of a Chestnut full ripe, and plain down almost to the Ears, but from thence downward somewhat curl'd, but more orient of Colours, wavering about his Shoulders; in the midst of his Head goes a Seam of Hair, or parting like a *Nazarite*, his Forehead very plain and smooth, his Face without either Spot or Wimple, beautified with a comely Red; his Nose and Mouth so form'd, that nothing can be reprehended, his Beard thick, the Colour of the Hair of his Head, his Eyes grey and quick; in reproving he is severe, in counselling courteous; fair spoken, pleasant in speech, mixt with Gravity; it cannot be remembered that any Body have seen him laugh, but many have seen him weep. In proportion of Body well shap'd and strait; his Hands and Arms very delectable to behold; in speaking very temperate, modest and wise. a Man for his singular Beauty far exceeding the Sons of Men.

Q Is there not a strange Relation of an Apparition that happen'd at Mahomet's Tomb.

A. Mr Knowls, in his History of the Turks, affirms

as certain Truth, That in 1620. a surprizing Vision was seen at *Medina* in *Arabia*, where *Mahomet* lie buried; which continued 20 Days, terrifying the whole Country. For Sept. 20, in that Year, a great Tempest of Wind, Rain and Thunder happened about Midnight; but when the Sky became clear, the People might plainly read in it, in *Arabian Characters*, these Words, *Oh, why will ye delight in Lies*. And between 2 and 3 in the Morning appeared a Woman cloathed in white, seeming to be encompass'd with the Sun; having a cheerful Countenance with a *Book* in her Hand. Over-against her were seen Armies of *Turks*, *Persians*, *Arabians*, and other *Mahometans* in Battle array, ready to fight with her; but she keeping her Station, only open'd the *Book*, at which the Armies fled, and presently all the Lamps about *Mahomet's Tomb* went out; then the Vision vanished, an Hour before Sun-rising murmuring Wind was heard, to which they imputed the extinguishing of the Lamps.

Q. What Event happened thereupon?

A. The Ancient Pilgrims of *Mahomet's Race* were much amazed to understand the Meaning of it, when one of the Priests made this Oration. The World had never but three true Religions, every one of which had a Prophet. First, God chose the Jews, and did wonders for them in *Ægypt*, and brought them thence by their Prophet *Moses*, and prescribed unto them a Law, wherein he would have maintained them if they had not been obstinate and rebellious, in falling to Idolatry; whereupon he gave them over, and dispersed them upon the Face of the Earth.

th. Then presently after God sent a new *Prophet*, which taught the Christian Religion to Perfection. This good Man the Jews condemned and sacrificed for a Seducer of the People, that the Monarchs of the world bowed down to this very *Ti*. But in process of time they grew as *corrupt* as the Jews, the Church being disjointed, & committing Idolatry again, God was weary of them all, and sent Divisions among them and *forsook* them. Yet God is still Governor of the world, and himself hath raised up another *Prophet*, even our *Great Mahomet*, giving him our Nations, so that no doubt we shall be happy for ever if we can but serve this God, and take warning by the Fall of others. But as we have *erred* in every Point, so that God hath manifested his wrath by keeping a *Prophet* from us, who prefix'd a time to return with all Happiness to his People, so that there are forty Years past by our accounts. And doubtless this fearful Vision is a presage of some great Troubles and Alterations, or either the opening the Book in the Woman's hand doth foretel our falling from the first intent of our Laws, whereas the armed Men depart as confounded with the Guilt of their own Consciences, or else it signifies some other Book wherein we have not yet read, and against which no Power shall prevail; so that I fear our Religion will be *proved corrupt*, and our *Prophet Mahomet* an *Impostor*. And then this Christ whom they talk of, shall shine like the Sun, and set up his Name for ever.

Q. What became of this notable Priest?

A.

A. The Company that heard him, charging him with Blasphemy, he was put to Death. This Relation was confirmed by *Iuff Chios* a converted *Aur* who came to London in 1636, and added, that the *Grand Signior* commanded none should speak of it upon Pain of Death.

Q. What were those women call'd *Sybills*, who prophecy'd of our Lord some Hundreds of Years before he was born?

A. They were reckon'd to be ten in Number, and to have the Spirit of Prophecy, and uttered many Speeches concerning Christ, tho the Heathens to whom they were spoken understood them not, Yet they are thought of such Importance for confirming the truth of the *Christian Religion*, tho they are often alledged by the Fathers of the Primitive Church against the Faith of Jesus.

Q. what was the first *Sybil's* Name, and what Prophecy?

A. She was called the *Persian*, prophesying thus From Adam unto Noah it appears, were fifteen hundred six and fifty Years. To make up the first Age, and from the Flood two Hundred Ninty Five are understood, to Abraham; From him *Israel* to free, From *Ægypt*, makes five hundred, added three till of King *Solomons* Temple the first Stone was laid, five hundred Years and eighty one. Four hundred Fourteen Years then will there be, to *Babylon's* distress Captivity. the Sixth Age from that Bondage will be seen to make up just six hundred and fifteen

which Year from a Virgin shall be born
 the Prince of Peace bound with a wreath of Thorn,
 in the seventh Age shall follow and attend
 till the Worlds Frame dissolves and time shall end.

Q. What was the Name of the second Sybil?

A. She was called the Lydian Sybil; & spake thus,
 A King, a Priest, a Prophet, all these three,
 shall meet in one sacred Divinity.

shall be espous'd to Flesh: On who can scan
 this Mytery, uniting God and Man.

When this rare Birth unto the world shall come,
 e'll the great God of Oracles strike dumb.

Q. What was the Name of the third Sybil?

A. She was nam'd the Cumean Sybil, thus prophesying.

the Ancient of Days shall yield to time
 and the new Creator to a new Creation,
 the Deity and God-head most Divine,
 accometh Man, and dies to ransom every Nation

Q. what was the Name of the fourth Sybil?

A. The Sybil of Delphos and prophecy'd thus

An Angel shall descend and say,

Blest Mary, Hail to thee,

Thou shalt conceive, bring forth a Son

Yet a pure Virgin be.

Three Gifts the Chaldees to thy Son,

shall offer with much Piety,

Myrrhe to a Man, Gold to a King

And Incense to a Deity.

Q. what was the Name of the fifth Sybil?

A. She was called the Sybil of Samos, prophesying

The World shall in six thousand Years expire
 By Water once, but then destroy'd by Fire
 the first two thousand void, the next the Law
 the next two under the Messiah's awe
 And as Repose by Sabbath is exprest
 Sun, Moon and Stars, all things shall then have Rest

Q. what was the sixth Sybil called ?

A. The Cumanian Sybil, prophecying thus.
 when Rome shall in Dominion grow high,
 Her proud Towers from 7 Hills braving the sky
 And shall subdue the world, in those blest Days,
 shall come a King of Kings and he shall Raise
 Another Generation, greater far
 than all the Monarchies before him were

Q. what was the Name of the seventh Sybil ?

A. she was called the European Sybil, and prophesied thus.

when the great King of all the world shall have
 No Place on Earth by which he may be known,
 when he shall come all mortal Men to save,
 shall find his own Life by the world o'erthrown.

Q. what was the Prophecy of the eighth Sybil ?

A. she derived her Name from the River Tiber
 Rome.

why at these Trifles stand the world amaz'd,
 And hath on them with Admiration gaz'd
 then wonder when the troubled world to appease
 He shall descend who made them that made these

Q. what was the Name of the ninth Sybil ?

A. The Assyrian Sybil born in Babylon, thus prophesied.

the great Oracles the Time's assign'd
 when God himself in pity to Mankind,
 all come from Heaven, and be on Earth incarnate
 innocent and a Lamb immaculate.

and though a mighty King, yet Fishermen,
 all be his Followers and subjects then,
 with whom against the world, the Flesh and Devil,
 shall make war and Pride, and all that's Evil.
 Amity shall quell, and the sharp sword
 with which they fight, shall be the *sacred word*.
 establish on a Rock, from which Foundation,
 shall be then divulg'd to every Nation,

Q. VWho was the tenth and last Sybil?

The *Aegyptian Sybil* who prophecy'd of *Numb. 3*

at which of us observes the *sacred Three*

three Persons in one God, in Unity,

that individual Essence who dare scan,

which is, shall be, and e'er the world began

as in Eternity, when of these three,

that do compose the Holy Trinity.

The second Person wisdom shall intomb

as Majesty within a Virgins womb,

as Man, true God, still to the blest three link'd,

the light shall shine, and false Stars be Extinct.

what is related in History about the 7 Sleepers

A. They were born in the City of *Ephesus* in the

time when *Decius* the Heathen Roman Emperor

persecuted the Christians. These good Men being

of that profession, whose Names were *Maximilian*,

Malchus, *Marcianus*, *Daricus*, *John*, *Serapion*, and

Constantinus, to avoid great Torture and the worship

of Idols, fled into a Cave, and after long praying,

fell

fell asleep. the Emperor caus'd the Mouth of it to be stoppt. *Decius* and his *Generation* being dead *Theodōnius* a Christian succeeded them, in who's time a Citizen of *Ephesus*, as he was making a Lodge for his *Shepherds* in that Cave, at the opening of the Mouth, these 7 Christians awak'd and saluted each other, they supposing they had slept but one Night. They gave *Malchus* 5 s. to go to the City and buy Bread, who found all things altered, for the People talkt of Christ and the true God without Fear. Offering his Money for Bread the Baker stoppt him, saying, Sure Young Man you have found some hidden *Treasure*, and had him before the Council, where he declar'd, that he and six more hid themselves Yesterday in a Cave to escape the Cruelty of *Decius*, and took that Money with them. The Emperor being made acquainted with it, went in Person to the Cave, where he found the other six alive and in good Health. Taking them home, they lived not long, but dy'd about Seven in one natural Day. They slept 200 Years.

Q. What Battle was that that was fought where none escaped?

A. The Red-sea, where *Pharash* and his whole Host were drowned.

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